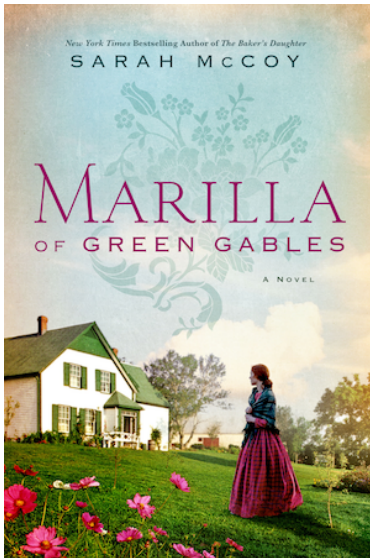


EXHIBIT H

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(Photo credit: Emily Martin / Courtesy William Morrow Books)

Excerpt: A New Perspective on a Classic in 'Marilla of Green Gables'

Sarah McCoy's historical novel imagines the young life of spinster Marilla Cuthbert, and provides a peek at Green Gables before Anne.

Books (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181024202555/http://flavorwire.com/category/books>) | By Jason Bailey
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20181024202555/http://flavorwire.com/author/jason605>) | October 24, 2018

L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* is one of the most durable stories in all of young adult literature, spawning sequels, prequels, films, and television movies and series. And now, bestselling author Sarah McCoy revisits the story, from a new point-of-view: that of Marilla Cuthbert, Anne's guardian (along with her brother Matthew), but from long before her intersection with Anne Shirley — thus creating a book that's gracefully mirrors and fleshes out *Anne's* coming-of-age narrative.

Marilla of Green Gables is out this week (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181024202555/http://a.co/d/f8bcKdk>) from William Morrow Books, who were kind enough to share this excerpt with Flavorwire.

FROM THE PROLOGUE (1876)

It'd been a rain-chilled May that felt more winter than spring. The apple, cherry, and plum trees were far less jubilant than usual. Their blossoms confetti-ed the pitched roof and washed down the eaves of Green Gables without anybody noticing. Marilla and Matthew worked side by side like blinder-clad horses, simply plowing ahead as they'd always done. The steady momentum they shared carried them toward the future. The farm chores needed doing, a lost button needed sewing, a batch of bread dough needed kneading: today was full. Tomorrow would come unpredictably, as was predictable. No use worrying until it was staring you in the face.

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Marilla huffed and dabbed the split in his forehead with witch hazel. He winced at the sting. Matthew was too forgiving. That fox wasn't looking for a nap. It was looking for her chickens and would've gobbled them up tooth and claw had Matthew not come upon it. She told him so.

"We had a mink in our coop last month," agreed old Dr. Spencer. "It killed all but one of our laying hens."

"Scared the milkers," Matthew continued.

He was in his bed now. Marilla had found him knocked out cold on the barn floor, dairy cows milling around like prissy church ladies.

"Scared me half to death is what it did."

She'd had to leave Matthew slumped over in the stable while she ran to the Lyndes' farm for Thomas, who then rode to fetch Dr. Spencer in town. Such a process. It'd taken her nearly an hour to send word for help. In her youth, she'd had quick legs, but they had changed. When she returned, Matthew was tottering around the barn, head bleeding, but otherwise alive. What if it hadn't been so? Time was of the essence when it came to life and death. She'd learned that well enough by now.

"Hit my head against the beam. Could've happened to anyone."

"Could've . . . but it happened to *you*." Marilla put the damp rag in the basin.

The wound clotted in a crimson streak across his brow.

"Glad there's nothing broken. A hearty contusion, though." Dr. Spencer leaned over Marilla to pull one of Matthew's eyes wide. "Don't see any dilation. You're just scuffed up and needing rest."

Marilla rose to throw out the pink water. The men's voices carried down the hall to the kitchen.

"You aren't the young man you used to be, Matthew. Sixty is a hard age to run a farm by yourself. This is coming from someone who's got some years on you. Trust me, it only gets harder. Ever think about hiring someone as a live-in?"

There was a long pause. Marilla stopped pouring the water to listen closer.

"I couldn't have another man living here," Matthew said finally. "Not with an unmarried sister. Wouldn't do."

"No, you're right, not a man. A farm boy? There are plenty of orphans in Nova Scotia looking to work for their keep. My daughter-in-law is going over next week to bring one back for herself. 'Twould be easy to bring two."

"I'd have to speak to Marilla about it first."

Marilla alighted on an old hope buried so deep that she'd almost convinced herself it had been a dream. Laughing little boys over checkerboards. A Christmas tree strung with berries. Mittens by the fire. Cocoa and gingersnaps. The smile of true love. Red *Abegweit*. Wishing stones and Izzy—dear Aunt Izzy.

Her eyes turned watery from the memory. She wiped them clear and finished washing out the basin.

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“Grateful it wasn’t worse, like you said.”

He nodded. “Keep him off his feet. After a night’s sleep, he should be back to his old self.”

She gave Dr. Spencer the angel cake she’d baked that morning and one of their last bottles of red currant wine. The new minister disapproved of fermenting spirits. All the Sunday school members had clucked in approval. Marilla wondered if they’d have been so reproachful of Christ turning water into wine. Probably so, given Rachel’s temperament these days. Marilla had stopped making her batches, but Dr. Spencer had been around too long to capitulate to the growing temperance. He’d been the young doctor at her mother’s bedside and attended to their every bruise and cough for the last forty years. The Cuthbert wine was his favorite. It was the least she could do to pay him for the house call.

She could barely wait long enough to wish Dr. Spencer good-evening before taking up the subject with Matthew.

“I overheard Dr. Spencer.”

He looked momentarily puzzled, then realized what she meant.

“Aye, so what’s your opinion on the matter?”

“Dr. Spencer is a wise man and a friend.” She crossed her arms with certainty. “A boy would be a great help. I wouldn’t have to worry so much about you working out there alone. We’d have someone to help with the farm chores. Run errands. Chase away foxes, if need be.”

He exhaled and gave a little grin. “I hoped you’d say that. Been too long since . . .”

She nodded quickly. “I’ll bake Mother’s biscuits. Sweet butter with a little preserves.”

A Cuthbert welcome. The wishes made were finally coming true.

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(<https://web.archive.org/web/20181024202555/http://a.co/d/f8bcKdk>) by Sarah McCoy. October 2018, William Morrow Books, an imprint of HarperCollins.

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